

DD/S 71-1246

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director-Comptroller**SUBJECT : Management Advisory Group Recommendations**

1. This memorandum is for your information.

2. On 26 March 1971, you sent through me to the Director of Training and the Director of Personnel, respectively, MAG papers dealing with the Career Training Program and the probationary period. While the two papers were principally the concern of the officers to whom they were forwarded, we felt that the other would each have some worthwhile comment to make, and we, therefore, presumed to make copies and requested such comment. Both the Director of Training and the Director of Personnel responded on the probationary paper. While only the Director of Training responded on the CT paper, the Director of Personnel advises me that [] discussed it with [] the head of the Program.

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3. Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Fisher, in their papers which are attached, have taken essentially similar positions against the extension of the probationary period. Mr. Cunningham believes that the best way to respond on the CT issue is to discuss it with the MAG. I agree. Before that is done, however, we want to review the Program with Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Fisher. Mr. Wattles and I have some thoughts about it which we will discuss with them, following which — panels being popular these days — the four of us could meet with the MAG.

4. I think we must be concerned with the implications of the statements made by the MAG on both of these subjects. In the case of the CT paper, though we might agree with the conclusion, it is reached for the wrong reasons and, in fact, it appears that the MAG has drawn again on a good deal of misinformation. Indeed it is regrettable that, with access to Agency sources for facts, the Group did not do the simple research which would have obviated some of the assertions made. The basic

MORI/CDF Pages 1, 2, 6 -
9, 12 - 14, & 16- 22

fallacy of the MAG proposal on the probationary period is the old one of treating the symptoms rather than the disease. In essence, it proposes to transfer to some procedural mechanic — read "Panel" — the supervisory responsibility for forthright evaluation of employee performance and the courage to initiate remedial — including separation — action where it is evident that the individual is not going to be a satisfactory long term employee of the Agency. Such a shifting of responsibility — a de-personalizing of supervision — is neither sound nor healthy management. I would suggest that the failure of the new professional to develop properly in the early years is as frequently a failure by the Agency as by the employee.

John W. Coffey
Deputy Director
for Support

5 Atts

- Att 1: Basic MAG Memo dtd 25 Mar 71 for ExDir, subj:
Recommendation on Lengthening the Employee
Probationary Period
- Att 2: Basic MAG Memo dtd 25 Mar 71 for ExDir, subj:
Recommendation that the CT Program Be Re-
examined
- Att 3: Memo dtd 7 Apr 71 for ADD/S fr DTR re Att 1
listed above
- Att 4: Memo dtd 7 Apr 71 for DD/S fr D/Pers re Att 1
listed above
- Att 5: Memo dtd 2 Apr 71 for Ex. Dir.-Compt. fr DTR,
subj: MAG Comments About the Career Training
Program


ADD/S:RSW/ms (8 Apr 71)

Distribution:

- Orig - Adse, w/O of Att 1 (DD/S 71-1086); cy of Att 2 (DD/S 71-1087);
O of Att 3 (DD/S 71-1229); O of Att 4 (DD/S 71-1121); and
O of Att 5 (DD/S 71-1179)
- 1 - ER, w/o Atts
- 1 - DD/S Chrono, w/o Atts
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- 1 - RSW Chrono, w/o Atts
- 1 - D/Pers, w/o Atts (4/21/71)
- 1 - DTR, w/o Atts (4/21/71)

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Remarks:			
Harry -			
We've sent a copy of the attached to DTR also.			
 Robert S. Wattles			
Att DD/S 71-1086			
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FROM: NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NO.		DATE	
Assistant Deputy Director for Support 7D18, Hqs		29 MAR 1971	
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FORM NO. 1-67 237 Use previous editions

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ADD/S:RSW/ms (29 Mar 71)

Distribution:

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1 - DD/S Chrono, w/o Att

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Att: Memo dtd 25 Mar 71 for ExDir fr Management Advisory Group
sub: Recommendation on Lengthening the Employee Probationary Period

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Remarks: Hugh - We would like any comments or observations you may have regarding the attached. Since we must respond to Colonel White by 8 April 1971, we would like to have your comments no later than COB on 6 April.			
 Robert S. Wattles			
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Att: Memo dtd 25 Mar 71 for ExDir fr Management Advisory Group, subj:
 Recommendation on Lengthening the Employee Probationary Period

DD/S 71-1086

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Remarks: <p style="text-align: center;">Please let me have your views on the attached MAG recommendation by 8 April.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 200px; height: 40px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;">LKW</p>					
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Att: Memo dtd 25 Mar 71 for ExDir fr Management Advisory Group,
subj: Recommendation on Lengthening the Employee Probationary
Period

Executive Registry

71-1546

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

25 MAR 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Executive Director

SUBJECT: Recommendation on Lengthening the Employee Probationary Period

CIA officers enjoy, in fact if not in theory, virtually unparalleled job security. They do not face the service officers' maximum time-in-grade hurdles nor the periodic competitive weeding out FSO's undergo.

There is one time only in his career when the inept CIA employee faces any real prospect of discharge: during his first or probationary year. Having survived 365 days, he is safe against all but the grossest offenses against security, decorum, or the law.

The Agency, traditionally very chary of exercising the DCI's statutory authority to make summary dismissals, has only proved willing to discharge the inept or miscast employee during his probationary year. In the last five years an average of ☐ professional-level employees (or $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ of all new employees) were so separated each year. In contrast, virtually none were discharged during this five years after their probationary periods had been completed. 25X1

The Agency seems content, and perhaps is morally obligated, to carry to retirement eligibility the formerly able officer who peaked after 15 years and is coasting. It correctly feels no similar obligations to the new officer who usually has minimal family obligations and a minuscule investment of tenure in his intelligence career.

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Despite the best of screening aids, hiring mistakes are inevitable. Many new employees themselves recognize mistaken career choices, and the greatest percentage of resignations in Agency professional ranks occur during the first five years of employment.

The Agency gives itself only a year to recognize and correct such hiring mistakes. MAG believes this time is clearly too short. CT's are still in training status when the year has expired (and are often receiving protective performance evaluations and "extra help" from their counselors.) PTP officers are still busily indexing documents in RID and dreaming of a future CS career. CS careerists can be evaluated fully only on their field performance, and few are lucky enough to escape desk servitude within a year.

MAG finds cumbersome, unnecessary, and possibly disadvantageous the suggestion of hiring new employees under contract. The paperwork is unnecessary, and the Agency's primary recruiting theme - "a career in intelligence" - becomes a bit hollow when followed by a contract offer with the standard 30-day notice clause. Adoption of such a practice would undoubtedly put us at a hiring disadvantage.

The contract suggestion rests in fact on recognition that Agency management has grown accustomed to letting contracts lapse but has shied away from firing staffers. It is thus in essence a dodge to circumvent traditional attitudes and practices.

Why not, instead, change practice? There is no statutory bar to CIA's setting any probationary period it wishes for new employees. MAG advocates adopting a five-year probationary period, with rigorous, competitive weeding-out hazards to be faced at the end of the third and fifth years.

This proposal parallels roughly the Macomber task force recommendations for fairly ruthless competitive selection out of less promising junior FSO's. It assumes that marginality can be detected fairly early in a career. (There is good

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evidence for this, in, among other places, the results of the CS evaluation panels.) It assumes that surgery is better and more humane early in a career than later. It holds the promise of fewer career misfits and of fewer future cuts in the established officer corps. It permits us to risk a greater infusion of new blood.

MAG advocates competitive ranking of new employees in each directorate and the automatic discharge at the end of three years of the lowest 10% and at the end of five years of another 5%. (There is nothing sacrosanct about the percentage cuts recommended but we think their logic can be supported. The CS Evaluation Boards are having little difficulty identifying a marginal 5% at each grade among more senior officers and we think the rationale of a probationary period argues for more rigorous pruning then than at mid-career.)


We suggest this procedure because the firing decision is always a painful one. No "sensible" supervisor wants to document the record, write the fateful recommendation, nor face down an irate employee. It is easier to try to palm off a marginal employee on another shop. The fixed percentage requirement avoids all this and ensures that the non-competitive officer is impartially identified and acted against. The two-stage procedure should permit some career experimentation and the rehabilitation of employees possibly miscast in one directorate but entirely competitive in another.

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Remarks: Harry - While this is primarily Hugh's to answer, Jack and I believe that, since you and [redacted] have at hand refutation of much of this, you should have a crack at it. That there are <u>some</u> grains of truth in this makes it all the more mischievous. Please don't give it any circulation. <div style="text-align: right;">  Robert S. Wattles </div> Att: DD/S 71-1087			
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FORM NO. 237 Use previous editions

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DD/S 71-1087: Memo dtd 25 Mar 71 for ExDir fr Management Advisory Group,
 subj: Recommendation that the CT Program be Re-examined

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Remarks: <p style="text-align: center;">I should like to give MAG a reaction to the attached by 8 April. Please let me have your views.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> <p>LKW</p> </div>			
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DD/S 71-1087: Memo dtd 25 Mar 71 for ExDir fr Management Advisory Group,
subj: Recommendation that the CT Program be Re-examined

Executive Registry

71-1545

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

25 March 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Executive Director

SUBJECT: Recommendation that the CT Program Be Re-examined

MAG thinks there is good evidence that the CT Program may have outlived its usefulness.

Two years ago a panel of senior CS officers unanimously concluded that the CT program was too seldom producing the sort of officer needed by the CS. CT selection standards emphasized academic excellence; the CS wanted operational acumen. The CT program was producing a bureaucratic elite; the CS wanted case officers. Last fall several divisions in the CS offered to forego their "CT quotas" in exchange for freedom to hire directly themselves an equivalent number of new officers off the street.

Several years ago the CT program was training 225 officers annually and was the "normal" route in for new officers. Today it is inducting fewer than 50 officers yearly, far fewer than are hired directly or promoted from the ranks to professional status. The danger of elitism, always present in the CT program, has been considerably heightened. Disgruntlement is atypically high among CT's and resignations frequent; the feeling of being among the chosen leads to exaggerated expectations and subsequent disillusionment. Many CT's expect quick advancement and good assignments simply because "they are superior."

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The shrunken CT program leaves us with an expansive and expensive training facility and an instructor-to-student ratio that exceeds 3:1.

To witness ennui at its acme, one need only address a CT class in the final week or two of their year-long training. This heavy "front-end loading" of CIA training violates sound learning principles. Compare the State Department's carefully considered proposals in "Diplomacy for the Seventies" for periodic training ties to level of responsibility and next job assignment.

OTR's staff and schedule is virtually enslaved to the CTP cycle. OTR was established to serve the Agency's total training needs yet finds it difficult to meet specific training requirements because it is committed to a fixed schedule for 50 CT's a year.

CT selection standards have varied widely with the availability of candidates. The July 1971 CT course will include several internal nominees who were rejected twice previously for CT status in days of easier outside recruitment. It will also include several internals for whom the CT training will be largely redundant but for whom the CT route is one of the few doors left open to staff status in these days of tight T/O's.

In these times of restricted hiring when obtaining quality new blood is at a premium, it seems contradictory to allow the CTP first pick of all applicant write-ins and the consequent ability to determine what sort of case officers DDP will get and what kind of analyst DDI may acquire. With so few to be hired, might not the hiring decisions best be shared with the officers most directly affected?

MAG would like to see hiring decisions decentralized and shared with the directorates, and training, save for a brief orientation course, tied to job progression in each career service.

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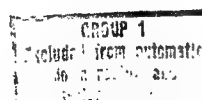
DDI 71-1207

7 April 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Deputy Director for Support**SUBJECT : Comments and Observations on the
Proposal of the Management Advisory
Group to Lengthen the Employee Probationary Period****REFERENCE : Note to DTR from A/DDS dtd 29 Mar '71,
same subject**

1. Lengthening the probationary period for new employees to five years and subjecting them to a "rigorous, competitive weeding-out. . . at the end of the third and fifth years" would not be of any significant value to the Office of Training in pruning its rolls of unsuitable or unsatisfactory personnel. Except for Career Trainees, most professional requirements are filled through conversion of officers from other career services and through the rotational tours of experienced personnel. During the last five years approximately 15 professional people were obtained through external recruitment. Accordingly, the majority of OTR staff officers have been with the Agency well beyond five years. The present one-year probationary period is entirely adequate for evaluating the suitability of new clerical employees who are assigned to OTR from the Office of Personnel at an average rate of seven per year.

2. The MAG proposal would probably have a depressing effect on recruiting people into the Agency, especially if they are told (and they should be) that an offer of permanent employment is subject to the satisfactory completion of a five-year probationary period. As it applies to the Career Trainee, I think it is too long. The average age

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of the CT at present is 27. The prospect of being automatically eliminated at age 32 on the basis of competitive rankings and fixed percentages would not likely be considered an attractive proposition. I believe that selection procedures currently in force sufficiently guarantee that our CTs have all the necessary qualities and background for success in the Agency. Where failure occurs, it is often explained in terms of the individual not having received the right amount of direction, guidance, supervision, and training during his developmental years. Occasionally, outside factors, such as family problems, show up early or late in his career and affect his performance and flexibility in regard to assignments.

3. Speaking of Career Trainees, I want to correct and comment on a statement made in paragraph 6 which says that CTs often receive "protective performance evaluations" and "extra help" from their counselors. There is no policy or other directive existing in OTR which advocates the assignment of "protective" ratings (false, padded, inaccurate?) on CTs. To my knowledge, there never has been a practice of this kind. Further, Program Officers of the Career Training Staff encourage the utmost candor in reports prepared on the CT by component supervisors during interim assignments of the young officer. Whether or not this is done conscientiously, of course, lies beyond the control of OTR. I am not certain what is precisely meant by the term "extra help" except to note that Program Officers, or counselors, are obligated to help the new CT with his problems, official and personal, whenever they are asked to do so, and if appropriate. This function is quite identical to that of the duty of the supervisor during the early stages of any other employee's career. There is simply no one else to do the job, and, in a real sense, the Program Officer is the CT's supervisor. It would be unthinkable not to offer this basic service to a new employee.

4. Perhaps a fuller explanation would clarify the implications of the last sentence in paragraph 11 which reads: "The CS Evaluation Boards are having little difficulty identifying a marginal 5% at each grade among more senior officers and we think the rationale of a probationary period argues for more rigorous pruning then, than at mid-career." From the statement, I do not quite see how it can be concluded that a "rigorous pruning" during the five-year probational phase will substantially reduce (?) or eliminate (?) the need for such action in the middle time of an officer's career. This conclusion

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presumes that nearly everything detrimental to success will manifest itself during the early years. This would be an ideal situation, but I am not sure we can rely on it totally even though the limited experience of the CS Evaluation Panels seems to have produced some justification for this method (pp. 2-3). In any event, why leave the job to a panel when supervisors and career service heads should be examining the records of all newcomers on a continuing basis? Though such a review would uncover some potential misfits, it still does not come to grips with the problem mentioned in paragraph 4 of the MAG memo -- that of the officer who has "peaked-out" at his mid-career point.

5. I am disturbed by the line of reasoning set forth in paragraph 12 as justification for establishing a separation program founded on intensive competitive rankings and fixed-percentage cuts at the end of three and five-year periods. Granting that this approach might be the one to use, it should be applied for the right reasons -- that it is the fairest, most efficient, and most accurate, not that it relieves the supervisor of the distasteful chores of "documenting the record, writing the fateful recommendation, facing-down an irate employee," or "palming him off on another office." It is conceivable that a system such as the one advocated in paragraph 12 would not promote good management practices. Primarily, it is oriented toward helping the supervisor to avoid his on-going responsibility to evaluate the employee candidly and take whatever action is necessary at the time, including the preparation of unfavorable Fitness Reports and the accompanying warning letter. The tendency could well foster an attitude of "let the panel do it." I also think that deferral of action to three and five-year periods would have the unpleasant effect of focusing attention, internal and possibly public, on the release of relatively large numbers of employees at the same time.

6. I doubt if a five-year period of probation is needed to evaluate every professional employee. Something like that amount of time might be necessary in the Clandestine Service, considering the time required for training, Headquarters exposure, and an overseas tour. It certainly should be less for some research and analytical jobs in the Intelligence and in the Science and Technology Directorates. I wouldn't need five years to assess the abilities of an instructor in OTR. Accordingly, the adoption of a five-year trial period throughout the Agency would not be realistic. The Organization would probably end up with more than one set of probational standards.

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7. The solution to many of the problems outlined in the MAG paper are already available. In two words it adds up to "vigilant management." The following points are relevant:

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a. Retain the one-year probationary period. It is entirely adequate for evaluating clerical employees and possibly other special categories of personnel. As stated in paragraph 3 of the MAG paper it succeeded in eliminating ☐ (2.5%) of the professionals. Possibly, Management should encourage that even greater emphasis should be placed on evaluating employees during this period. OTR training programs could be of further help in achieving this objective.

b. Continue to stress the fact that Fitness Reports must record absolutely accurate evaluations of employee performance and that this is a supervisory obligation, not an option. The uniform application of this elementary principle of good management would eliminate the need for procedures like the ones outlined in the MAG paper: it deals with the problem as it arises and on its own merits. OTR can help here also.

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c. Employ more diligently and extensively the review procedures prescribed by ☐ As you know, these regulations require that at the end of the three-year provisional period the Head of the Career Service must ". . . carefully evaluate the individual's suitability for selection as a Career Employee. . ." The regulation also establishes procedures for handling a recommendation that the employee's Career-Provisional appointment be terminated. Obviously, the various career services have not used this means of separating employees unfit for, uninterested in, or unable to assume the responsibilities and obligations of Agency employment. Perhaps a directive or instruction from top management is necessary to activate this little used regulation.

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☐
HUGH T. CUNNINGHAM /
Director of Training

Attachment
MAG Recommendation

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7 APR 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Support

SUBJECT : Recommendation on Lengthening the Employee Probationary Period

REFERENCE : Memo for ExDir-Compt fr MAG dtd 25 March 1971, same subject

1. We do not agree with the recommendation that the employee probationary period be lengthened. Nor do we believe that an arbitrary number of employees should be separated at the end of three- and five-year periods.

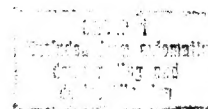
2. The MAG recommendation rests on assumptions about the nature of the work force and Agency management which are highly questionable and, if implemented as presented, could have a seriously adverse effect upon professional recruitment and the morale of our young professionals.

3. MAG's first assumption seems to be that we need a mandatory weeding out of 14 to 15% of new professionals in a five-year period. Add to this a certain number of professional employees who will go each year through normal attrition--currently at an all-time low of 5.6% per year--and we could conceivably encounter an unacceptable loss rate. Other assumptions or implications which we question include:

a. Present recruitment and selection procedures are wrong about 15% of the time; possibly so, but we are not prepared to grant it.

b. Agency management lacks the courage to identify and eliminate misfits; and "the fixed percentage requirement avoids all this and ensures that the non-competitive officer is impartially identified and acted against." We do not concede the first point, and the track record in the "701" and other ranking exercises suggests at least a reasonable doubt as to the second.

4. On the positive side, we do agree that our career selection process must be improved. We have available the policies, regulations and procedures which can accomplish the MAG objectives and can achieve them within an existing framework. As you know from our discussions of this subject, we do not believe these important screening procedures have been used adequately and we are well along in our planning to improve the effectiveness of this program.



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5. The policies and procedures which govern the conversion of Career Provisional appointees to Career Employee status are formalized in [] and have not been changed since they were approved by the DCI in September 1961. At that time the Director announced that they were intended to strengthen existing career concepts and to foster the continuing evolution of a strong Career Service in the Agency. There is no doubt that our practices since then have fallen short of this intent to establish a real distinction between Career Provisional and Career Employee status. For example, of approximately [] employees who completed three years in Career Provisional status and were considered for Career Employee status during the last three calendar years, all but 49 were converted to Career Employee status and action on those was deferred. None were terminated. Although no statistics have been kept on resignations related to career selection activities, the Chief, Special Activities Staff confirms our impression that only a few employees leave the Agency as the result of career selection screening.

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6. Although the basic concepts in [] are essentially sound, there is evident need to strengthen the whole career selection operation as a management tool and to make the prospect of conversion to Career Employee status of greater significance to the individuals concerned. It is also apparent that we must depend for the most part upon psychological and attitudinal changes to accomplish these improvements. From our review and discussions with the OGC and others, we conclude that certain actions would improve the career selection process significantly. Some months ago, in anticipation of the increased emphasis we plan to give to the conversion to career status at the end of the three-year provisional period, we added an appropriate statement in the remarks section of our Form 1150 (see Tab A). We have also prepared a list of other actions which are almost but not yet quite ready to be forwarded for your approval. We have attached this list as Tab B, but without the supporting documentation, only to provide assurance to the MAG that we are serious about improving the career selection process at the end of the three-year provisional period.

/s/Harry B. Fisher

Harry B. Fisher
Director of Personnel

Atts: 2

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OD/Pers/HBFisher:djp (6 Apr 71)

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71-1179

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02 APR 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director-Comptroller

SUBJECT : MAG Comments About the Career Training Program

1. The comments received from the Management Advisory Group about the Career Training Program are interesting and provocative. Unfortunately, some of the Group's conclusions apparently are based on inaccurate and misleading information.

2. In the interest of conserving the Group's time, as well as OTR's, I propose that I and Chief, CTP, brief and discuss with the Group all aspects of the Career Training Program. Perhaps with a better understanding of the Program, the Group could then offer some helpful suggestions for the selection and recruitment of young professional officers.

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HUGH T. CUNNINGHAM
Director of Training

Distribution:

O - Addressee

X - DDS

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